

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 01952 01 OF 02 101907 Z

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INFO SECDEF WASHDC

MBFR CAPITALS 219

USNMR SHAPE

USLOSACLANT

USCINCEUR

USDEL SALT TWO II

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 1952

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E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: MBFR: ALLIANCE FRICTIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF VIENNA, THIS MESSAGE ANALYZES SOME ASPECTS OF THE MBFR TALKS WHICH HAVE CAUSED FRICTION AMONG THE NATO ALLIES AND SUGGESTS SOME POSSIBLE WAYS OF HOLDING DOWN SUCH FRICTION IN THE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. REPORTING MESSAGES FROM BONN, LONDON, MOSCOW, USNATO, AND THIS DELEGATION INDICATE THAT THE MBFR PROJECT THUS FAR HAS CAUSED A DEGREE OF FRICTION AND STRAIN AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE, AND EVEN WITHIN SOME ALLIANCE GOVERNMENTS. AS AN EXAMPLE, UK REPS AT NATO, VIENNA AND MOSCOW HAVE ASKED, DOUBTLESS REFLECTING SOME COMMON POSITION, WHETHER THE POTENTIAL GAIN FROM MBFR IS WORTH THE FRICTION IT ENGENDERS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE AND WHETHER, IF THERE ARE PRESSURES

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PAGE 02 VIENNA 01952 01 OF 02 101907 Z

FOR US WITHDRAWALS OF MBFR, IT WOULD NOT BE BETTER TO YIELD TO THEM IN THE SENSE OF UNILATERAL WITHDRAWALS WITHOUT THE ATTENDANT DAMAGE OF THE MBFR PROJECT. THE QUESTION IS SOMEWHAT RHETORICAL GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE MBFR ENTERPRISE IS IN TRAIN, BUT DOES EXEMPLIFY CONCERNS FELT BY MANY. IN THE INTERESTS OF THE FUTURE, IT MAY BE WORTH REFLECTING ON THE CAUSES AND EXTENT OF THIS FRICTION AND TO TRY TO SEE HOW IT MIGHT BE DEALT WITH IN TIME AHEAD. WHAT FOLLOWS IS NECESSARILY LIMITED BY THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE AND BY THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE BUT ALSO BASED ON PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF MEMBERS OF US DEL WITH THE MBFR SUBJECT MATTER.

2. IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THE REPORTED FRICTION EXISTS. SOME PART OF IT WAS PREDICTABLE AND UNAVOIDABLE. OTHER ASPECTS HAVE BEEN LESS SO AND HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH US MBFR TACTICS. THE PREDICTABLE ASPECTS OF INTRA- ALLIED FRICTION FLOW FROM EUROPEAN OPPOSITION TO AMERICAN FORCE REDUCTIONS AS SUCH AND FROM EUROPEAN UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE POSITION OF EUROPE IN THE NEW US- SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, AS ARTICULATED ON THE ONE HAND IN FEARS OF THE BEGINNINGS OF A TOTAL US WITHDRAWAL FROM EUROPE AND ON THE OTHER OF A SOVIET-AMERICAN DEAL AT EUROPEAN EXPENSE. PAST EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT DOUBTS OF THIS KIND ARE ENDEMIC IN THE US- EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP AND CAN NEVER BE FULLY SATISFIED. GIVEN GENERALIZED EUROPEAN APPREHENSIONS ABOUT MBFR, IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE THAT THESE CONCERNS WOULD BECOME MORE ACUTE AS THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS BECAME ENGAGED. ALTHOUGH THEY CANNOT BE ERADICATED, THE FACT THAT THEY FORM THE BACKGROUND OF ALLIED THINKING ON MBFR OF COURSE HAS TO BE KEPT IN MIND IN FORMULATING US TACTICS.

3. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO MORE SPECIFIC POINTS OF DIFFICULTY WITH REGARD TO THE MBFR PROJECT IN RECENT MONTHS. THE FIRST HAS BEEN THE US EFFORT, STARTING IN OCTOBER 1972, TO CONVERT THE FIRST PHASE OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS FROM ONE WHOSE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE AN EXPLORATION WITH THE EAST ON WHETHER THERE COULD PROFITABLY BE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, TO ONE WHICH PRESUPPOSED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE AND WHOSE OBJECTIVE WAS TO PREPARE THEM. THE US SHIFT ON THIS POINT WAS SUDDEN AND IT TOOK NEARLY FOUR MONTHS OF CLOSE DEBATE TO BRING THE ALLIES TO THE US VIEW. IN THE EVENT, US SUCCESS IN GAINING ALLIED SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION WAS CONSIDERABLE, ALTHOUGH THE US POSITION WAS REGARDED BY MANY ALLIES AS EVIDENCE OF A US DESIRE TO GET THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AT ANY PRICE AND OF SOME PRIOR UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOVIETS.

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 01952 01 OF 02 101907 Z

4. THE SECOND PROBLEM AREA WAS, OF COURSE, THE STATUS OF HUNGARY. IN VIEW OF THE ACTUAL OUTCOME, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORTHWHILE IF THE ALLIES HAD USED THE TIME BETWEEN THEIR RATHER HALF- HEARTED INVITATION OF HUNGARY IN MID- NOVEMBER 1972, AND THE OPENING OF MBFR TALKS ON 31 JANUARY 1973, TO WORK OUT SOME CONTINGENCY PLANS ON HOW TO COPE WITH A POSSIBLE NEGATIVE SOVIET RESPONSE ON HUNGARY. SUCH A COURSE MIGHT HAVE RESULTED IN THE PRESENT DEBATE IN NATO BEING CARRIED OUT EARLIER AND UNDER MORE FAVORABLE TERMS AND WOULD AT LEAST HAVE AVOIDED ONE PHENOMENON WHICH RAPIDLY EMERGED AFTER THE SOVIET NEGATIVE POSITION BECAME KNOWN: COUNTRIES LIKE THE UK, WHICH HAD BEEN SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF INCLUSION OF HUNGARY IN THE FIRST PLACE, BECAME OUTRAGED WHEN THE SOVIETS REFUSED TO INCLUDE IT, AND SUDDENLY CAME TO ATTACH MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE QUESTION.

5. THIS CONVERSION OF A POINT ORIGINALLY CONSIDERED TO BE OF MARGINAL IMPORTANCE INTO A PRIME NEGOTIATING VALUE OF MANY ALLIES ILLUSTRATES A MORE GENERAL ASPECT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION, THE NEWNESS AND STRANGENESS, DESPITE SOME EXPERIENCE WITH CSCE, OF AN ACTUAL NEGOTIATING SITUATION FOR ALLIED OFFICIALS ASSIGNED TO NATO. THE LATTER ARE ACCUSTOMED PRIMARILY TO DRAFTING DOCUMENTS WHICH REPRESENT COMPROMISES AMONG ALLIANCE POSITIONS WHICH ARE THEN REFLECTED IN ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF ALLIED GOVERNMENTS. IN THE DIFFICULT STRUGGLE TO REACH AGREED ALLIED POSITIONS ON MBFR, MANY OF THESE OFFICIALS STILL TEND TO FORGET THAT THERE ARE OTHER PARTIES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEIR OWN VIEWS. THEY TEND PSYCHOLOGICALLY TO ASSUME THAT, GIVEN SUCH DETAILED, DIFFICULT DEBATE AND EXAMINATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, THE RESULTS WILL SOMEHOW BE PUT INTO EFFECT. THE CONCLUSION WE WOULD DRAW IS THAT AN ELEMENT OF THE CONDITIONAL SHOULD ALWAYS BE DELIBERATELY INCLUDED IN NATO DEFINITIONS OF NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES ON MBFR. INDEED, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO CONSIDER THE OUTCOME OF NATO DELIBERATIONS AS GUIDELINES DESCRIBING PREFERRED " APPROACHES" TO NEGOTIATION ISSUES, RATHER THAN AS " OBJECTIVES."

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SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENNA 01952 02 OF 02 101931 Z

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ACTION MBFR-02

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EUR-10 PM-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENNA 1952

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6. AS REGARDS HUNGARY, A SECOND PROBLEM WITH THE ALLIES AROSE BECAUSE WASHINGTON RAPIDLY CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE SOVIET POSITON ON HUNGARY WAS SERIOUS, AND THE US MADE A SERIES OF ACTION PROPOSALS TO THE ALLIANCE BASED ON THAT CONCLUSION. FOR THEIR PART, THE EUROPEAN ALLIES DID NOT REACH THIS CONCLUSION WITH THE SAME SPEED. INDEED, THE BEHAVIOR OF THE EAST IN VIENNA GAVE SOME OBJECTIVE REASON TO JUSTIFY THE WESTERN EUROPEAN BELIEF THAT THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE WAS STILL OPEN: THE SOVIETS WERE TIMID AND ALMOST APOLOGETIC IN INTRODUCING THEIR VIEWS ON HUNGARY; THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISARRAY AND VARIANCE AMONG THE EASTERN EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS ON THIS SUBJECT; AND THE SOVIETS DID NOT CATEGORICALLY SAY THAT HUNGARY WAS EXCLUDED, BUT SCOUTED AROUND FOR COMPENSATION INSTEAD.

7. AFTER A MONTH OF DEBATE IN NATO, THE US HAS COME OUT FAIRLY CLOSE TO WHERE WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE. BUT PERHAPS WE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER, AND MIGHT DO BETTER IN THE FUTURE WHEN SUCH DIVERGENCES IN ASSESSMENT OF THE EUROPEAN POSITION
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PAGE 02 VIENNA 01952 02 OF 02 101931 Z

ARISE, IF WE PURSUED A COURSE OF ALLOWING THE ALLIES TO COME TO OUR CONCLUSIONS ABOUT SOVIET POSITIONS IN THEIR OWN TIME THROUGH REPEATED DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF SOVIET OBDURACY. TO HAVE TAKEN THIS APPROACH IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE WOULD HAVE AVOIDED STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN IMPRESSION OF AN AMERICAN DESIRE TO GET TO AN MBFR CONFERENCE EVEN AT A HIGH PRICE IN PRESUMED EUROPEAN SECURITY INTERESTS OR OF SOME US- SOVIET UNDERTANDING ON HUNGARY. IN THE PRACTICAL SENSE, WHILE WAITING FOR OUT ALLIES TO COME ABREAST WITH US ON HUNGARY, WE SHOULD PERHAPS HAVE SHIFTED EARLY AND RAPIDLY TO AN ALTERNATE MODE OF ADVANCING DISCUSSIONS SUCH AS THE PRESENT BRITISH PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSING AGENDA ITEMS OR A REPETITION OF THE UNSTRUCTURED PLENARY BEFORE THIS BECAME UNDESIRABLE TO THE SOUTHERN FLANK PARTICIPANTS AND TO THE EAST.

THIS TOO MAY BE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE APPROACH IN FUTURE SITUATIONS.

8. A FURTHER PROBLEM IN THE MBFR TALKS THUS FAR HAS BEEN THE PROBLEM OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATO COUNCIL IN BRUSSELS AND THE AD HOC GROUP IN VIENNA. ALL THOSE AMERICAN OFFICIALS WHO HAVE WORKED ON THE MBFR PROJECT REALIZE THAT SOME FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO BODIES WAS BUILT INTO THE OVERALL SITUATION AND IT EMERGED EARLY IN THE NAC DISCUSSION OF ITS COORDINATING ROLE IN THE TALKS. THE NAC HAS A LEGITIMATE AND NECESSARY ROLE IN MBFR AS THE MAIN FORUM OF ALLIANCE POLICY COORDINATION. AT THE SAME TIME, MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP ARE OFFICIALS OF THEIR SENDING GOVERNMENTS AND NOT INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS WORKING FOR THE COUNCIL. THE PROBLEM IS INTENSIFIED BY THE PERSONAL POSITION AND SELF- IMAGE OF SOME VETERAN PERMREPS, PARTICULARLY THE BELGIAN AND NETHERLANDS.

9. IN THE HUNGARIAN CASE, THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF THE DIFFICULTIES LISTED IN THE PARAGRAPHS ABOVE WAS A RATHER PANICKY RESORT TO THE COUNCIL BY SOME ALLIES IN AN EFFORT TO SLOW DOWN THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF THE US POSITION, FOLLOWED BY REPEATED US EFFORTS TO BRING THE COUNCIL TO RELEASE ITS HOLD ON THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE AND TO PERMIT IT TO BE FURTHER EXPLORED IN VIENNA. SOME OF THESE EFFORTS, LIKE THE SUDDEN US SWITCH TO SUPPORT OF THE BELGIAN POSITION AND THE VERY QUICK EFFORT TO GAIN NAC AGREEMENT TO THE US ALTERNATIVE POSITION ON THE HEELS OF THE NEGATIVE SOVIET RESPONSE ON FEB. 23, WHILE PERFECTLY RATIONAL IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, HAD THE UNDESIRE SIDE EFFECT OF INTENSIFYING SUSPICIONS OF US MOTIVES ALONG LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE. THE OVERALL PROBLEM WAS COMPOUNDED BY SUBMISSION TO THE NAC OF DETAILED TEXTS COVERING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENNA 01952 02 OF 02 101931 Z

NEXT MOVES BY THE AD HOC GROUP, FIRST BY BELGIANS AND THEN BY THE US.

10. SOME OF THE CONCLUSIONS WHICH MIGHT BE DRAWN FROM THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN THE NAC- AD HOC GROUP RELATIONSHIP THUS FAR ARE: TO THE EXTENT THAT COHENSION CAN BE MAINTAINED IN THE AD HOC GROUP, THERE WILL BE LESS RESORT TO THE NATO COUNCIL AS A SAFETY BRAKE. THIS WILL REQUIRE RESTRAINT AS TO TEMPO OF THE TALKS. THE AD HOC GROUP SHOULD TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE PRESENT AGREED POSITIONS OR AT LEAST AGREED ALTERNATIVE TO THE COUNCIL. WHEN MBFR IS DEBATED IN THE COUNCIL, WE SUGGEST THE LATTER SHOULD BE REQUESTED TO GIVE GENERAL GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES, RATHER THAN TO DEAL WITH ACTUAL TEXTS OR SPECIFY DETAILED OBJECTIVES. WE BELIEVE THE COUNCIL'S FEELING OF BEING IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE PROCEEDINGS IN VIENNA SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED THROUGH MORE FREQUENT CONSULTATIONS WITH AD HOC GROUP MEMBERS, AIMED AT ENCOURAGING GENERAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GROUP AND THE COUNCIL. PERHAPS THIS MIGHT BE

DONE THROUGH PERIODIC REPORTS BY THE AD HOC CHAIRMAN PLUS TWO OTHER MEMBERS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING US REP. SUCH REPORTS, SHOULD BE MADE DIRECT TO THE COUNCIL AS WAS DONE BY QUARLES AND (RATHER ONE- SIDELY) BY THOMSON, AND AS HAS BEEN DONE IN SALT AND BONN GROUP BRIEFINGS IN THE PAST.

11. MANY OF THE ABOVE POINTS ARE WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, AND ALSO OF HARD EXPERIENCE WITH ALLIED OPPOSITION IN THE AD HOC GROUP. THEY ARE NOT INTENDED AS FINGER POINTING; IF ANYTHING, THIS DELEGATION IS AT FAULT FOR NOT HAVING MADE THESE OBSERVATIONS EARLIER AND MORE VIGOROUSLY THAN WE DID. THERE WILL DOUBTLESS BE OTHER ACTIONS WE CAN TAKE IN THIS FIELD, BUT WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO REDUCE TO A SUPPORTABLE LEVEL EVEN THOUGH NOT TO ELIMINATE INTRA- ALLIED FRICTION FROM THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. HUMES

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